

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

SP-02 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15

STR-04 CEA-01 L-03 H-02 CAB-02 DODE-00 DOTE-00 FAA-00

IO-13 /108 W

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R 271607Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3976

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L FREETOWN 3035

PASS TO TREASURY AND FEDERAL RESERVE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIN, SL

SUBJECT: GOSL AIRPLANE PURCHASE: EFFECT ON PARIS CLUB AND IMF

REF: (A) PARIS 27525, (B) FREETOWN 2554

1. EMBASSY HAS LEARNED THAT GOSL MAY ALREADY HAVE MADE FIRST DOWN PAYMENT ON PURCHASE OF AT LEAST ONE AND POSSIBLY TWO FOKKER 614, 40 SEAT, JET AIRPLANES. LOCAL ESTIMATE OF COST IS 6 MILLION LEONES PER PLANE PLUS 3 MILLION LEONES SPARE PARTS CONTRACT FOR EACH, THUS MAKING SALE APPROXIMATE 18 MILLION LEONES (APPROXIMATELY \$16 MILLION). WITH
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TRAINING OF CREWS AND MAINTENANCE COST MIGHT DOUBLE.

GOSL HAS MADE PRACTICALLY NO PREVIOUS STUDY OF ECONOMIC JUSTIFICATION FOR PLANES AND HAS LITTLE UNDERSTANDING OF WHETHER IT (OR THEY) WILL BE USED FOR INTERNAL FLIGHTS OR AS AN ADDITIONAL COMPETITOR ON WEST AFRICAN RUN.

2. FOR BONN: EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT SOME OR ALL OF SALE FACILITATED BY EITHER FRG LOAN OR FRG GUARANTEE. SINCE FRG ONE OF PARTICIPANTS IN PARIS CLUB AND CURRENTLY GUARANTOR OF NOT INSIGNIFICANT GOSL DEBT, EMBASSY FINDS IT DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND HOW FRG COULD HELP SADDLE GOSL WITH ONE MORE UNNECESSARY LARGE DEBT. FYI: FRG AMBASSADOR HERE HAS SUPPORTED THIS SALE IN SPITE OF OPPOSITION FROM OTHERS IN HIS EMBASSY. END FYI.

3. FRENCH AMBASSADOR AND BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER SHARE MY DEEP CONCERN OVER THIS PURCHASE.

4. COMMENT: EMBASSY STRONGLY BELIEVES THAT GOSL PURCHASE OF PLANES WOULD CALL INTO QUESTION SERIOUSNESS OF GOSL INTENTIONS TO IMPROVE ITS ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL BEHAVIOR AND SET ITS ECONOMY RIGHT. SUCH PURCHASE WOULD SERIOUSLY UNDERMINE THE REQUEST BY GSOL TO IMF FOR STANDBY, ALL REQUESTS BY GOSL TO WORLD BANK, AND PENDING REQUEST FOR DEBT RESCHEDULING BY PARIS CLUB.

5. VICE PRESIDENT AND MINISTER OF FINANCE KOROMA AND GOVERNOR OF CENTRAL BANK BANGURA EXPECT TO TALK TO IMF OFFICIALS DURING MANILA CONFERENCE TO FURTHER THEIR REQUEST FOR STANDBY. EMBASSY HOPES THAT IMF OFFICIALS ARE AWARE OF IMMINENT NATURE FOKKER PURCHASE AND WILL ACT ACCORDINGLY. END COMMENT.

6. FOR MONROVIA: EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT SOME THOUGHT IS BEING GIVEN TO JOINT GOSL/GOL AIR SERVICE AND PERHAPS PURCHASE OF ONE OF ABOVE PLANES BY EACH COUNTRY. WE UNDERSTAND THAT FOKKER TEAM MAY BE IN MONROVIA NOW. AMERICAN CITIZEN, MARSHALL TEICHNER, MAY BE INVOLVED AS SALESMAN, ALTHOUGH HIS EXACT INVOLVEMENT IN GOSL DELIBERATIONS SHADOWY. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANYTHING RELATED TO THIS YOU MIGHT REPORT.
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SAMUELS

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